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The Re-affirmation of State Socialism: The South African Debate

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Introduction

C. Wright Mills in his work *The Sociological Imagination*² challenges the would-be social analyst to:

"Be a good craftsman. Avoid any rigid set of procedures. Above all, seek to develop and use the sociological imagination. Avoid the fetishism of method and technique. Urge the rehabilitation of the unpretentious intellectual craftsman and try to become such a craftsman yourself. Let every man be his own methodologist; let every man be his own theorist: let theory and method again become part of the practice of the craft."

To take up this challenge requires innovation, a departure from the accepted, knowledge of the world beyond the self, and a tolerance of the different and unknown. It is this openness to the 'new' that needs to characterise any individual's attempt to understand the 'new' South Africa.

In analysis it is important to develop a paradigm to interpret reality. It requires congruence of moral-consciousness combined with pragmatic moral responsibility and accountability for the results of interpretations and concomitant actions. All in society are confronted with certain rights simultaneous with certain obligations. Total freedom of action and thought can therefore only be experienced in the realm of the intellectual mind, not in the reality of expression. Innovation is counterpoised with verification. Mills, in advocating a confrontation of the old, did not negate pragmatism - it demands discipline of thought, tested by reality. It is within this constraint and autonomy that the social analyst must operate. The role has become progressively more complex requiring cognisance of both the objective and subjective

¹ Paper presented at the "East Europe: Between Western Europe and East Asia" conference, Aalborg University, Denmark, 19-21 May 1994, by Dr. Peter W. Cunningham, Department of Sociology, University of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The paper is a summary of a more extended discourse concerning the South African economy, state and the trade unions.

² C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford University Press: New York, 1959.

conditions. No longer can existing structures and processes be taken for granted. Criticism of convention must be grounded in the possible rather than the utopian.

To adequately execute this role necessitates an introspection of one's own value system and a knowledge of the value system(s) of the society under investigation. Individuals can only describe an approximation of the reality experienced by others, not reality itself.

Man is by nature predisposed to stability and conflict. Individuals do not confront each other as inanimate objects, but as complex subjective entities. As such, man exhibits an optimal level of conflict tolerance. Non-destructive change, both in the individual and society, occurs within a framework of stability. In developing this argument the following needs consideration:

- * Is conflict inherent in all relations but eclipsed by stability?
- * Does stability imply being 'static'?
- * Consensus, as is conflict, is a process.
- * Consensus and conflict are equally significant for change.
- * Although value systems may diverge there are more similarities than differences, and
- * What is the basis of and consequence of conflict expression in South Africa.

In addressing these questions the discourse surrounding the content and nature of change in South Africa has engaged a broad spectrum of social theorists for decades often with little relevance or substance. Nevertheless, a revisiting of these debates (although not the subject of this paper) is significant to an understanding of the content and form of the current and future social formations. As development and development analysis is still a contested concept and field, and rightly so,³ it is acknowledged that the present analysis is premised on a subjectivist methodological and ideological perspective. Implicit is an acknowledgement of a need for a normative dimension to the study of societal change and development. This does not negate the importance of objectivism in analysis, for the latter, with subjectivism,-

³ B. Hettne, Development Theory and the Three Worlds, Longman: Essex, 1990, p.232.

represents a dualism rather than a dichotomy, the two conditions being complementary rather than opposites.

During the past five decades social transformation in South Africa has become synonymous with peaceful defiance, violence, liberation, terrorism and negotiated reform. Despite the adoption of the latter during the past three years as the dominant mode to bring about political change by the most significant parties in their effort to retain the moral high-ground, the society still remains a contested terrain where conflict and consensus are interdependent and equally relevant for analysis. The demise of apartheid has not removed social conflict but reinforced and in some cases restructured its sources and expression. The fundamental power relations of domination and subjugation, class antagonism, racial tension and relative deprivation remain, and are likely to remain intact for a significant period under the new dispensation. As it emerges out of the period of legislated apartheid the debate around its future development path focuses on its historical legacy, the government of national unity and the complex nature of its social structure and composition.

Although much of the substance of change in South Africa is symptomatic of universalistic trends in development there are currents within the society which contradict present universalistic paths of economic and political reform.

Against this background the paper addresses:

- * the socialist content of the dominant forces in the society, and
- * the development of state elitism.

Discussion is mediated by an awareness that "It is futile to draw up perfect models for an inherently imperfect world. It is nevertheless possible to identify basic trends and, as it were, to 'assist history' by resisting unviable, utopian projects and supporting realistic utopians, such as making a shift towards sustainable development and safeguard cultural pluralism. A disintegration of the present hegemonic world order, which is an integral part of the 'global crisis' would make these 'realistic utopias' look less distant."⁴

⁴ B. Hettne, op cit. pp.249-250.

A recent survey⁵ found that whites under the new regime will continue to be responsible for the biggest tax burden as a consequence of their current higher income and blacks higher level of unemployment and educational disadvantage.⁶ Whites will contribute 20 per cent of their income in direct tax this year, followed by Asians who will be responsible for 11 per cent, coloureds seven per cent and blacks only three per cent. Change in South Africa, and the cost of transformation will therefore be directly relative to the white population's contribution and participation in the economy. Hence policy formation will be constrained by the extent to which government policy threatens this primary source of revenue.

The economy has increasingly been driven by a policy of capital-intensive production, specifically in mining, the consequence of which has been a disregard for the promotion of small⁷ and specifically medium-sized concerns - the latter often constrained by bureaucratic red-tape. Nevertheless, the racial composition of the informal sector and increasingly the formal sector since the 1970s has been transformed with an increasing number of blacks being involved through the relaxation of entry related legislation. Such relaxation often being premised on ideological rather than economic motives. Concomitant to the apartheid economic policy of inward industrialisation, the government sought to create a black middle class to stem the tide of non-racial radicalism within the country, and furthermore to act as a buffer in inter-racial conflict. In its quest to become self-sufficient, compensate for its global isolation and maintain its power position the state was driven by the application of a policy of technocratic modernisation of the economy. As such the South African economy in many aspects (for example, in banking and communication) has developed into a complex economic configuration that is not compatible or conducive to policies that are not market-led or which restrict such institution's involvement and competitiveness in a world economy. Consequently, the development of an alternative economic policy is restricted by the involvement and interdependence of the South African economy in the world economy. Although sceptical of a 'global convergence' towards a market-led economy, it cannot be denied that to ensure sustainable growth South Africa will have to become a player in an increasingly competitive world economy. "The process of international economic integration has gone so far that autarchy, even on a regional level, is practically out of the question."⁸ In this regard, "self-

⁵ Unisa Bureau for Market Research. In Sunday Times, April 17, 1994, p.33.

⁶ Although not restricted to blacks they do contribute disproportionately to the unemployment level which is estimated to represent between 40 and 60 per cent of the economically active population.

⁷ The Small Business Development Corporation has played a significant role in this regard.

⁸ B. Hettne, op cit. pp.251.

reliance ... is quite contrary to the current economic logic." Furthermore, the "Viable interregional relations must also be explicitly political, i.e. created on the principle of symmetry, rather than emerging from the principle of competitive advantage, which, in the absence of political constraints, ultimately ends up in a perverted division of labour."⁹ South Africa will be forced to adapt to a world economy in transition. Economic rationality will thus mediate in policy formation. The choice of economic policy will not only affect South Africa but the whole of Southern Africa. Consequently, the destabilisation of the South African economy has the potential of destabilising the fragile eco-political systems beyond its immediate neighbours. Under such conditions economic policy is subject to both internal and external pressures. Current political stakeholders will become weary of sacrificing the golden calf in the name of political ideology!

The argument regarding considerations significant to economic policy formulation presented thus far may be defined as reformist and mechanistic. However, as the debate proceeds around the nature of the future re-integration of the South African economy into the world economy, and the move to internationalisation, there is an awareness that agreements like GATT do not offer the opportunity for mass democracy and protest, unlike a 'living wage campaign', for the issues are more complex and have less ideological appeal.¹⁰

Under such conditions a more flexible and transparent approach is likely to prevail regarding industrial restructuring, redistribution and nationalisation with a comparable commitment to collective bargaining to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Is such an approach compatible with the demand by a segment of the labour movement for socialism?

Interaction between trade unions, business and government has been in the forefront of change since the late 1970s, a relationship that has intensified during the past three years leading to the establishment of a number of bilateral and trilateral forums, such as the National Economic Forum.

As regards the acceptance of socialism, workers and worker organisations remain divided - a situation that has fuelled extensive political violence during the past three years. Black

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ B. Godsell, 'Realeconomics': A Discussion and Debate, *Bitalerial Review*. 2(3), 1993, p.12.

worker oppression characterises the political consciousness of black workers making them receptive to socialist doctrine.

During the past decades the independent and progressive labour movement has been dominated by divergent ideological orientations. However, during the past two years the Congress of Trade Unions of South Africa (Cosatu), the leading trade union federation, with over one million members, has increasingly articulated a socialist content. Cosatu, in its mutual condemnation of apartheid has been in a strategic alliance with the African National Congress since its unbanning. Despite such an alliance the leading forces in the labour movement have been adamant on retaining their independence, (a central tenet of Cosatu's ideology) prior and after the transformation of apartheid.

Concern for the lack of labour independence is couched in a concern that "Socialism establishes a new labour discipline. Labour discipline is strengthened under socialism by means of the efficient organization of production and a well-thought-out system of moral and material incentives to individual workers and whole work teams. Combined with the high general level of education and culture of workers, this ensures that conscious labour discipline is established."¹¹

The threat to this independence has been foremost in resolutions passed by Cosatu affiliates during the past year.

Nevertheless there is a dualism in this ideology for it exhibits both Marxist-Leninist content and a demand for an independent labour movement in continued opposition to the state. The socialist content of the movement has been strongly influenced by the South African Communist Party. Slovo,¹² in discussing the role of the South African working class and the national democratic revolution, points to Lenin regarding trade union involvement in the struggle.

"Those who would like to restrict the meaning of class struggle to a trade union struggle against the bosses, and who see political struggle only through narrow economistic spectacles, would do well to heed Lenin's words on the question:

¹¹ M. A. Kader, (ed.) Africa's Guide to Scientific Socialism. Nehanda: Harare, 1985, pp.76-77.

¹² J. Slovo, *The South African Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution*. An umsebenzi Discussion Pamphlet. South African Communist Party. nd., p.5.

'Is it true that, in general, the economic struggle is "the most widely applicable means" of drawing the masses in to political struggle? It is entirely untrue. Any and every manifestations of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one whit less "widely applicable" as a means of drawing in the masses ... Of the sum total of cases in which workers suffer (either on their own account or on account of those closely connected with them) from tyranny, violence and lack of rights, undoubtedly only a small minority represents cases of police tyranny in the trade union struggle as such' (Selected Works, Volume 1, p.136)."

For Slovo

"When workers engage in the national struggle to destroy race domination they are surely at the same time, engaging in class struggle."

"Class struggle does not fade into the background when workers forge alliances with other class forces on commonly agreed minimum programmes. The history of all struggles consists mainly of such interim phases."¹³

Consequently, the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (currently one of Cosatu's largest affiliates) at its national congress last year called for the nationalisation and redistribution of the wealth of the commanding heights of the economy without compensation and, the reconsideration of its alliance with the African National Congress after the April 1994 election.

During the process of societal transformation from an authoritarian regime the discourse pertaining to the nature of the new social formation has been dominated by ideological content rather than political or economic expedience, substance and policy. It is thus argued that in societies, like South Africa, that are characterized by conditions of extreme relative deprivation and consequent structural disparity the direction of change is vulnerable to the advancement of models elevating a state socialist content despite their adherence to democracy. Under such conditions an 'illusionary democracy', corresponding to the nature of the former regime comes to dominate the post-authoritarian regime. The control of the new regime is thus legitimated by its association with democracy. From this perspective, state socialism or 'peoples power'

¹³ Ibid. pp.6.

is argued as being a state formation representing equality and thereby an omnipotent force in the process of societal transition to bring about social parity.

In this process of structural re-evaluation there is a danger of nepotism and the formation of 'incestuous cliques' - groups that develop an exclusive, and elitist mentality thereby regarding their perspective on the outcome and process of change as the only possible and correct position. Such formations preclude the possibility of open and free debate. This negates their adherence and advocacy to freedom of speech and action.

Since its formation in 1912 the African National Congress has been a symbolic representation of the aspirations of the majority of blacks. There is little evidence that the organisation's formal ideology played a major role in its appeal. Rather, its popularity rested principally on its role of systematically rejecting the apartheid system. Having formally removed the 'system' this base for its popular appeal is transformed and thereby significantly reduced - as it moves from a liberation to a policy forming, implementing and administering organisation. Material advantage for the black majority rather than ideological justification will dominate popular development expectations. Development both social and individual being strongly associated with the state as an objective entity.

Most societies undergoing a process of rapid change are subject to the formation of alternative elite formation, as islands of control move from one ruling group to another - South Africa is unlikely to be an exception.

Prior to 1990 and the unbanning of the African National Congress a significant number of oppositional liberation organisations developed in South Africa. The most prominent in the 1980s being the United Democratic Front and the Azanian People's Organisation. With the return of political exiles and the legal operation of the African National Congress the United Democratic Front was disbanded leaving a significant power vacuum at the local community level. Some of the latter organisation's members joined the ranks of the African National Congress and now form part of its leadership. Consequently, with the African National Congress assuming power many local leader have and will be absorbed into the state apparatus. Combined with affirmative action programmes a significant amount of local community expertise is removed causing a leadership (and possibly a power) vacuum at the grassroots level. Until a second generation of leaders develops the community will be vulnerable to the dictates of the national leadership.

Power, and specially political power, lends itself to abuse. The African National Congress ascends to power in an inherently undemocratic society. However, in forming part of a government of national unity, the African National Congress will be forced to co-operate with individuals who previously occupied positions of power in society. Depending on forces to mitigate the latter's influence, the Congress may become vulnerable to the abuses of power practised by the previous government.

The recent election process has not removed, and is unlikely to remove in the short to medium term, the cleavages which characterised the previous white dominated state. The current state continues to be characterised by tension and struggle even internal to the ruling group. This represents both an internal and external challenge to legitimacy of policy makers - legitimacy remaining an achieved rather than an ascribed condition. The inter-class alliances secured during the period leading up to the elections will now be tested. Consequently, although the ruling group will have power they may be impotent to put such power to legitimate use as a result of the diverse ideological content of constituents of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party/Congress of South African Trade Union alliance. Legitimacy obtained of power under such conditions could transform itself into a fractionalised expression of self-interest to maintain personal power. These conflicting political streams within the dominant state apparatus could result in the dominance of an ideology that ensures the sustained position of those in power. With the expansion rather than contraction of the state the tendency towards oligarchic and bureaucratic structures threatens to dilute participative democracy.

Although the labour movement historically pioneered negotiation as a mechanism to bring about change, especially since the late 1970s the majority of the members of such movements have not been socialised into a culture of political democracy. This provides a breeding ground for cognitive dissonance as 'lination' organisations during the last decade have embarked on mass action campaigns to achieve their demands while simultaneously continuing to involve themselves in a negotiated solution. Such mental confusion, combined with the low level of education among blacks means that 'solutions' to the social problems confronting the new state will gravitate to the responsibility of an ever increasingly small group. Popular democracy and decision making is limited in its ability and flexibility to achieve rapid responses to problems as complex as economic and political restructuring. Considering that demand among the majority of South Africans is an immediate solution to their social and economic deprivation, expeditious decision-making will be elevated above grassroots democratic decision-making. This contradiction in the government's commitment to democracy could lead to a legitimacy crisis and a concomitant threat to the stability of the society, as

piecemeal solutions are provided to deal with day-to-day crises. This raises the question of the validity of the decision-making process. The need to make rapid progress in addressing pressing social needs will negate the current 'democratic' structures that are being set-up to insure national unity and democracy.

In reviewing the democratic content and form of the state two aspects need consideration: democracy internal to the state, and the presence or absence of democratic forces within the society.

Regarding the former the thesis developed is that there is an ideological contradiction among the leading party members in that there is the simultaneous demand for equity in the distribution of wealth (the demand for redistribution of wealth mainly extends only to the commanding heights of the economy defined as an expression of racial capitalism and super exploitation rather than a parity of assets among all segments of the society) and an expression of bourgeois-led materialism. The latter, in some respects represents a continuation of the capital accumulation as practised by many blacks under the system of apartheid and now being sanctioned and encouraged. Furthermore, democracy is assumed within the present exploitative relations of production. As such it represents no change from the previous system. The basis of class conflict remains unaltered, the retention of which provides the ingredients for state socialism, or in its more extreme form, socialism. Political and economic reform in Russia and Eastern Europe because of its 'failed' policies has not removed the aspiration for a socialist transformation in South Africa. "Socialism holds great fascination for the vast majority of the people of ... Southern Africa as a whole. Everywhere one goes in this sub-continent ... the people are captivated by the promise of a better future that Socialists predict will surely come one day."¹⁴

The South African Communist Party, in its 1984 constitution, declares that its aim is to lead the working class towards the strategic goal of establishing a socialist republic 'and the more immediate aim of winning the objectives of the national democratic revolution which is inseparably linked to it'.¹⁵ The constitution describes the main content of the national democratic revolution as

"... the national liberation of the African people in particular, the black people in general, the destruction of the economic and political power of the racist ruling class,

¹⁴ M. P. Ushewounze. In M. A. Kader, op cit. pp.i.

¹⁵ J. Slovo, op cit. pp.3

and the establishment of one united state of people's power in which the working class will be the dominant force and which will move uninterruptedly towards social emancipation and the total abolition of exploitation of man by man."¹⁶

Applying a Marxist-Leninist doctrine Slovo, in his defence of socialism, attempts to make the theory indigenous to structural conditions of South Africa. In the process he reinforces a notion of the development of an undemocratic state elite. He acknowledges that the South African black population is divided into different classes and strata, that their long-term interests do not necessarily coincide, and that they do not have the same constituency and commitment even in the immediate objectives of the democratic revolution. He therefore believes that it is from within the ranks of the black middle and upper strata that the enemy will look for sources of collaboration. Although, in his use of the word 'enemy' he is referring to the 'apartheid regime' it cannot be denied that many blacks were either co-opted or willingly became part of a middle class and that they currently exert a potent force to retain their current socially upwardly mobile position. Such a position is perpetuated by the African National Congress in its simultaneous reinforcement of class division (through its demand for the implementation of affirmative action programmes) and the demand for national struggle. The result of which is class-led exploitation. If the African National Congress does not respond to the instrumental demands of the old and emerging middle class this aspiring group will either be forced to submit to the dominance of the state and/or be systematically forced to leave South Africa. This would open the way for a political elite to dominate the masses and, institutionalised proletarianism.

The democratic process within South Africa is largely directed by the Freedom Charter a document endorsed by the broad Congress movement (of which the African National Congress was a member) at Kliptown in 1955. During the 1980s it became the most significant document to mobilise the masses to oppose the apartheid regime. Although its content expresses the aspirations of all the classes of the oppressed people, it in itself, is not a programme for socialism, 'even though ... it can provide a basis for the uninterrupted advance to a socialist future.'¹⁷ Relating this opinion to the fact that the majority of South Africans subscribe to the Charter, including the mainstream unions within the Congress of South

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.4.

African Trade Unions, credence must be given to the observation that 'The place of the socialists is not out on the margins' in South Africa.¹⁸

Support for socialism and caution on the possible policy of the African National Congress is echoed in the words of Jeremy Cronin of the South African Communist Party who states that:

"An independent, trade union based workers' party ... is premised on the belief that the ANC will soon be 'the government', and nothing but the government. Once in power the ANC will do exactly what certain other liberation movement have done - wave goodbye to popular aspiration. Could this happen?

It certainly could. But to simply assume it will, is to walk away from the most important strategic challenge of our time: the battle for the life and soul of the ANC...

The ANC must remain a broad, mass-based national liberation movement. The place where socialists, left and working class formations is within this broad, ANC-led movement - not out on the margins ... The workers' party idea prepares workers for permanent opposition, permanent defence, permanent marginalisation."¹⁹

Further issues that give substance to the debate around the future of South Africa are:

- * How the state will accommodate returning exiles and migrants from South Africa's impoverished neighbouring states, and absorb them into the existing civic structures.
- * The state will be forced to deal with the extreme social and economic problems facing the majority of South Africans. To achieve this objective in the short-term the attraction by the state to move over into adopting socialist policies remains a real alternative. Despite the fact that

"In the contemporary political scene the ideology of socialism seems to be spent force.

¹⁸ South African Labour Bulletin. 17(4), p.20.

¹⁹ J. Cronin. In South African Labour Bulletin. Ibid.

This, however, does not mean that a future function of socialism may not still remain. As long as the system of production and distribution is irrational from the points of view of human needs and ecological sustainability, the socialist tradition will always constitute a source of criticism and utopias."²⁰

- * The bureaucratic nature of the apartheid state was inclined to a mentality of paternalism, authoritarianism and totalitarianism. In the absence of the removal of former public servants, these forces will influence and condition the current state apparatus.
- * The state will seek to protect its own economic interests and social privilege.
- * The upward mobility of the black majority through newly acquired opportunities open to them and application of affirmative action will redefine the 'black' persons role within society. This new role definition will necessitate a movement from an adversary to an integrational role leading to conflict in role expectations and role performance thereby holding out the potential for role confusion. Such confusion could be used to the advantage of state interests and mute opposition. Under such conditions there is the danger that the state will give more attention to remaining in power than addressing long-term economic stability.
- * The notion of a national unitary state embraces a dilemma as second tier regional leaders assert their local power to ensure that they retain community credibility.
- * Government supported development programmes have the potential of creating an independent but often government sponsored co-opted black middle class, a proportion of whom will (and already do) hold significant political and economic power. Furthermore, policy formation is constrained by the need to absorb the existing black bureaucratic bourgeoisie the group that previously administered the 'independent states', homelands and black townships. Because of the absence of any 'organic' growth of a socialist ideology among this group, their social and economic interests differ significantly from South Africa's working class and peasantry. In this regard Slovo comments,

²⁰ B. Hettne, op cit. pp.231

"It is obvious that the black capitalist class favours capitalism and that it will do its best to influence the post-apartheid society in this direction."²¹

- * The African National Congress's Reconstruction Programme in its current form does not represent in its content an anti-imperialist and anti-colonial revolution although the document's genesis in the labour movement reflected such opposition.
 - * The state in its adjustment to political reality, will be unable to withstand the imperialist forces of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It will be forced to weigh-up the advantages of meeting the needs of the majority of people through the adoption of socialist policies and a need to satisfy the international community's demand for an unconstrained market and economy.
 - * A government of national unity lack a clear identity, vacillating to meet the demands of a heterogeneous constituency, it will be unable to give direction to change, thereby following a zigzag development path.
- Under such conditions the ability of a government to create a comprehensive and coherent economic, political and cultural policy is significantly retarded or removed completely.
- * Race-domination, a lack of racial assimilation, and the presence of distrust, will continue to shape social structures and consciousness. Forces of nationalist egoism and desire to hold on to power and position will continue to permeate the major institutions of society. Change has occurred in the absence of a cultural revolution. Ironically, the liberation struggle has generated a strengthening of material culture formations. However, the simultaneous demand for redistribution and wealth acquisition will increase poverty and social inequality.
 - * South Africa will not be able to abrogate the cultural dominance of Western-educated intellectual elites.

To nullify the legacy of a culture of class domination permeating all facets of society may require an interventionist state-led strategy which will strengthen oligarchic

²¹ J. Slovo, op cit. pp.8.

tendencies. Reform characterised by extreme political intervention is inconsistent with democracy.

- * Restricted in its ability to act democratically the state will move over to crisis management. Under such conditions, crisis managers want to strengthen the state further, others want to leave all decisions to the market, and a third current looks for the solution in a revival of (local) community. Since the first line seems to be the weakest we can speak of a crisis not only for the welfare state but the state as such. Both market (neoliberal) and community (neopopulist) approaches contradict the logic of statism. At present the first trend seems to be the stronger.²²
- * The current conspicuous consumption by leading figures within the ruling party reinforce perceptions of bourgeois nationalism which contradict any attempt to instil a working class mentality in the majority of the population. Laws will not be sufficient in themselves to stem the development of a materialist-driven culture.
- * The state in adhering to a policy of transparency will have to demonstrate its willingness to address inaccurate perceptions of reality often fostered by rumpur. To-date its track record in this regard is suspect.

Conclusion

The process and obstacles encountered during the past election have not removed the debate surrounding the legitimacy of the state - a situation that will heighten the potential for conflict. This conflict is largely motivated by a conflict in the value systems held regarding the process and mechanism of change and the structure and ideological content of the current state. This is not to imply that such conflict is necessarily bad, for by itself, it is neither positive or negative. Where the conflict offers the possibility of progress to a more cohesive value system, the conflict will be positive, however where the conflict threatens the development, or even the existence, of one or more of the value systems involved, it could become negative. The conflict expressed in South Africa therefore has the potential for forging a unified South African value system and nationhood. Furthermore, it can act to mitigate against the unhealthy convergence of power in the hands of a small elite. Alternatively, the fragile economic system could negatively respond to continued violence leading to a rapid decline in the socio-economic position of the majority of the population both internal to South Africa and in the

²² B. Hettne, op cit. pp.18.

broader Southern Africa. Under such conditions the security of the whole sub-continent of Africa would be in the balance.

True reform in South Africa requires a complete restructuring of the power relations in the society. For

"the needs for reforms is economic but the means will have to be political as well, implying fundamental changes in the power relations.

On the level of ordinary people the main issue of course is whether reforms mean any improvement in their living standards or not. As always, any change would have differential effects on various groups.

The economic system is also a power structure and therefore no economic changes possible without political changes modifying this power structure. As a matter of fact, much economic reformism is political opposition in disguise"²³

Democracy requires a continuation of the internal struggle to ensure bureaucratic forces do not come to control society in the name of democracy. In this way there will be a greater guarantee of a broad democratic leadership which will exert an influence on the revolutionary process in South Africa and counteract and abolish the previous elite formations and culture. Related is a realisation that there is a need to reorganise the current system of production without significant negative consequence for the total economy. If this is not achieved there is the danger that through the process of political transformation one form of exploitation will replace another. And, that this exploitation will replace another. And, that this exploitation will be combined with a continuation of economic exploitation. Central to change is the expression and locus of power. At present the majority of the population are unable to stop the encroachment of exploitative forces within society and specifically within the apparatus of state.

The future of South Africa rests on the ability of the state to build a new unified society. Models of development and their mechanistic inferences contribute little to the understanding of the transformation of South Africa. However, at present what we are witnessing is a transformation that represents an ascendancy of a bourgeois-led democracy with a potential for moving over into state elitism. A state led by the old capitalist formation combined with a newly created African bourgeoisie rather than with working class forces and which in line

²³ Ibid. pp.230.

with socialist ideology, will use the full machinery of the state to control and secure its hegemony.

As South Africa moves into a new era of development social reconstruction requires cognisance of the objective and subjective forces within the society rather than an unidimensional conception of what is desirable, permissible and achievable. At present the society contains both the conditions and prerequisites for a socialist and market-led transformation. The international communities vigilance to ensure South Africa's growth and adherence to democracy.

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